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ABSTRACT

An overview of Ohio's proficiency testing program is presented and specific information pertaining to the testing at each grade level is detailed. The proficiency tests at each of four grade levels in Ohio include tests in writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship, with science tests to be added in 1996. All of the tests, at grade level 4, 6, 9 and 12, are based on learning outcomes adopted by the State Board of Education. Every public school student must take all of the tests, which are administered by examiners who are certificated employees of the school district. The State Board of Education has established a proficient standard for each of the tests at each grade level. Tests are scored by a national scoring firm, and results are returned to the school district. Procedures are given for exceptions for disability, waivers, test security, and other testing policies. Descriptions of the tests at each grade level summarize the outcomes measured. An appendix presents an appeal form for oral administration of the ninth-grade proficiency tests. (SLD)

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Ohio's Statewide Testing Program:

Rules for Proficiency Testing

ED 398 250

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Substitute House Bill 231, passed in July 1987, provided for the establishment of a statewide high school proficiency testing program for Ohio high school students. Since that time, additional legislation has been enacted to modify and expand this testing program to include proficiency testing at four grade levels: 4, 6, 9, and 12. Some aspects of the program are similar at all grade levels while others are unique. The purposes of this booklet are to provide an overview of Ohio's proficiency testing program in general and to share specific information pertaining to the testing at each grade level.

What are the proficiency tests?

The proficiency tests at each of the four grade levels include tests in writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship. Science will be added as an area to be tested beginning in the 1995-96 school year. Specifically, science will be a test area beginning in February 1996 for twelfth grade, and March 1996 for the other three grade levels. All of the tests at each grade level are based upon learning outcomes adopted by the State Board of Education. These learning outcomes specify the knowledge and skills that each student is expected to have encountered in each content area and grade level by the time he or she reaches that grade level. By beginning testing in grade 4, the state assists local districts in identifying any students at risk of not performing satisfactorily. Once students have been identified, essential intervention can occur.

Who is required to take the proficiency tests?

Every public school student must take all required tests in every tested grade level, unless that student is exempted because of a disability.

Are students in chartered non-public schools required to take the tests?

Every ninth-grade student enrolled in a chartered non-public school is required to take the ninth-grade tests beginning in the 1995-96 school year. Any student graduating from a chartered non-public high school after September 15, 1998, is required to pass all areas of the ninth-grade tests as well as meet curriculum requirements in order to receive a diploma. While chartered non-public schools will be required to participate in the ninth-grade program, they may choose to participate, as they have had the opportunity to do so since the program began, in any other grade level proficiency test providing they follow the same rules as public schools do.

How are proficiency tests developed?

All test questions and related material on any of the tests are written or selected according to specifications provided by Ohio educators and field tested in Ohio schools. Ohio educators, serving as subject matter specialists on a content committee for each test area at each grade level tested (i.e., 4th, 6th, 9th, and 12th grades), review all items prior to and following completion of field testing. In addition, a bias review panel examines and approves each test item before field testing and analyzes the results after field testing. Members of this panel are selected to represent the cultural diversity within the state and are trained to scrutinize all test materials for content or format that could adversely affect one group as compared with another.

The grade level content committees and the bias review panel recommend those items that should be retained in the item bank for use on test forms and those that should be discarded. Only reviewed, field tested, and approved items are used on any of the proficiency tests or the practice tests that the state provides. Each fall, principals of buildings with students at each proficiency grade level receive enough newly-printed practice tests so that grade level students each receive one. Districts administer and score all practice tests locally. There is no specific administration time for giving the practice tests. Districts may administer and score the practice tests when doing so is deemed appropriate for their students.

ADMINISTRATION

Who administers the proficiency tests?

The proficiency tests at each grade level are administered by examiners who are certificated employees of the school district. For any group of more than thirty students, proctors will assist examiners so that the ratio of examiners/proctors to students is not fewer than one examiner to thirty students in any examination room. Proctors, however, do not necessarily have to be certificated school personnel; responsible adult volunteers or temporary employees may be utilized if necessary. If fewer than thirty students will be tested in a room, a certificated staff member will serve as the examiner. Examiners and proctors are provided assistance and direction by district and building test coordinators. Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that all examiners and proctors are thoroughly trained and that all policies, procedures, and schedules are followed.

How much time should be allowed ?

Each proficiency test is designed to be an untimed test: students have up to 2 1/2 hours to complete each test area. No student should fail a test as a result of working or reading slowly. It is recommended that each school schedule a significant portion of the total time (perhaps an hour, or an hour and fifteen minutes). Any student who does not finish in the allotted time must be given additional time, up to a total of 2 1/2 hours per test area.

May any groups of students have additional administration time?

Three groups of students may have more time per test area up to a maximum of one school day:

1) Students on an individualized education program (IEP) may have additional administration time specified as a modification in the IEP itself.

2) Students on a 504 Plan may have additional administration time specified as a modification on the 504 Plan itself.

3) Students whose native language is not English may have additional administration time and use of a translation dictionary.

Except for the two modifications of extended time and use of a translation dictionary for limited English proficient (LEP) students, all modifications must be specified in the IEP or 504 Plan.

What options are available to accommodate students who finish the tests early?

It is likely that some students will complete the tests sooner than others. The options regarding how to deal with students who finish early fall into two broad categories: keeping students in the examination room until an established time or permitting students to leave the examination room on a periodic or continuing basis. Some options within each category are listed in this section. In deciding which option is preferable, consideration should be given to a number of factors, including maintaining test security, the size of the group tested, school policy or procedures regarding student movement in the building, the capability of monitoring student movement, and concern for the needs of individual students. While elementary and secondary schools may deal with this issue in different ways, all schools must maintain security procedures regardless of how timing issues are resolved.

If students are kept in the examination room until a scheduled release time, the examiner may wish to have available a variety of reading materials which students could access quietly upon completing the examination (after these students' test materials have been collected). In addition, it is possible to have paper available which students who have finished the test could use for personal writing. Students are not permitted to bring any such materials with them to the testing session.

If students are permitted to leave the testing room, there are at least two alternatives: periodic dismissal (e.g., after forty-five minutes, after one hour, etc.) and continuous dismissal (i.e., each student leaves after completing the test). Among the important considerations are the ability of the examiner to ensure that test

security is maintained (including the collection of all completed test materials) and to minimize the distractions for students who have not completed the test. For either alternative, procedures (including test security measures) should be made clear, including where one is allowed to go (e.g., to the library, to the cafeteria, etc.) when dismissed from the testing room.

Prior to testing, arrangements need to be made with the building coordinator for the immediate collection and secure storage of completed and uncompleted tests from every examination room. Provisions also need to be made for giving additional time (up to a maximum testing time of 2 1/2 hours) to those few students who may not have completed the test during the allotted time.

What reference materials, resources, or devices are students allowed to use during the test administration?

During the administration of a test, students are not permitted to use reference materials, resources, or devices of any kind, except pencils. There are three exceptions to this rule. One exception is the use of an acceptable calculator and protractor in sixth-grade mathematics and the use of an acceptable calculator (see twelfth-grade administrative manual) on the twelfth-grade mathematics and science tests. Calculators may not be used in either fourth-grade or ninth-grade tests. Another exception is for students whose IEPs list modifications which might include reference materials, resources, or devices. The last exception is for LEP/ESL students who may use a translation dictionary.

Since students do all of their work in the test booklet and/or write or mark responses on a separate answer document, they do not need extra paper. They need number two pencils for the three multiple-choice sections of the test and either a pencil or pen for the writing test section. Each examiner should have a supply of extra pencils for those students who do not bring one.

Must a home-schooled student take the proficiency tests?

No. Home-schooled students are not part of the school enrollment. However, with the cooperation of the district and the

home-school provider, such students may take proficiency tests under the same rules and procedures.

SCORING

Who determines the passing standards?

The State Board of Education established a proficient standard for each of the tests at each grade level. The Board reviewed recommendations of standard-setting committees (comprised mainly of Ohio teachers at the appropriate grade levels) and reports from the Testing Steering Committee (comprised of administrators looking at logistical issues), Bias Review Panel (comprised of representatives of the diversity we see in Ohio looking at equity issues), and Technical Advisory Panel (comprised of national and state testing experts and psychometricians looking at technical issues). Each of these last three groups reviewed the procedures and recommendations of the standard-setting committees.

How are the tests scored?

After each test administration, answer documents or scannable test booklets are sent by the building testing coordinator to a designated national firm that has been selected through a competitive bid process to provide scoring and reporting services. Reports of students' results are returned to the district within 60 days of the last day for make-up testing. Tests are scored and student results are reported with no direct cost to the schools or to students.

Score reports provided to each school indicate how students performed on all tests taken. Districts are responsible for keeping records of individual student proficiency performance from year to year. Except for results of the twelfth-grade tests (where students will not be taking any more proficiency tests), additional subscale information is provided for any student who does not meet the established proficient standard. The additional subscale information describes the student's performance in relation to the typical performance by students who score just at the proficient standard. Proficient standards have **NOT** been established for

each subscale. The indicators should be used only to show areas of relative strengths and weaknesses. Interpretive guides are provided to assist in clarifying proficiency results at each grade level.

How are the scores reported?

Student results of the ninth-grade tests are reported as pass or fail. Results of the fourth, sixth, and twelfth grade tests are reported as proficient or below proficient. Another difference in reporting is with scaled scores. Passing is set at a scaled score of 200. The proficient scaled score level of 200 will not change until the State Board of Education raises the standard. At grades 4, 6, and 12, each student's scaled score is reported. At the ninth-grade, scaled scores are reported only for students who fail a test area.

This distinction among results at different grade levels is very appropriate where results are used as an early identification of students at risk of not performing satisfactorily relative to the proficiency outcomes. At the fourth-grade level, students whose scores are below proficient must receive intervention in grade five. Districts may include in those intervention services some students whose fourth-grade results were barely proficient, because these students could still be at risk.

ESTABLISHING PROVISIONS FOR EXEMPTIONS

Each school district shall adopt a policy and establish procedures regarding the participation of students with disabilities. Such policy and procedures shall include and/or be consistent with the provisions of Rule 3301-13-03 and Rule 3301-13-09 of the Administrative Code. A school district may exempt a student with a disability from taking one or more of the proficiency tests. Such exemption is made by the IEP team and is specified in the IEP. Modifications in test format and/or test administration procedures will be made to accommodate the needs of an individual student if such modifications are specified in the IEP.

Which students would be considered disabled, and can students with disabilities be given a "blanket" exemption?

Section 3301.0711 of the Revised Code specifies that any student having a disability in accordance with Chapter 3323. of the Revised Code may be exempted from any of the proficiency tests, but no students can be given a "blanket" exemption. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

How may the participation of students with disabilities be determined?

The decision to exempt individual students with disabilities from participation in any part of the proficiency tests and/or make modifications in test administration procedures must be made by the IEP or 504 team. The basis for the decision to exempt from any part of the proficiency tests must be documented on the IEP or the Section 504 Education Plan. No student who is exempted by the IEP may be prohibited from taking the proficiency tests.

What modifications may be made for students with disabilities who participate in proficiency testing?

Students with disabilities may require modification in administrative procedures if such modifications are consistent with those typically afforded the student in the classroom, and provided that the modifications are specified in the IEP/504 Plan. No modifications in the test content may be made. Braille and large-print versions of the test are provided to districts upon request. A variety of modifications in administrative procedures could also be made, including, but not limited to, increased time, oral administration, and use of a scribe. Necessary modifications to format and administrative procedures are made to accommodate the individual needs of students as specified on the IEP. See page 5 for additional information on modifications in time of administration.

With the exception of certain provisions for students with limited English proficiency, the only modifications that may be made are those specified in the IEP or 504 Plan.

Can a student with disabilities be exempted from parts of the proficiency tests?

Exemptions are made by test area, based upon the area(s) of disability. If a student does not qualify for exemption in all areas, the student must take the test(s) in the non-exempted area(s). Decisions regarding a student's participation in or exemption from any of the proficiency test areas must be made at an IEP or Section 504 Education Plan meeting. Such decisions should be based to a great extent on the match between the student's curriculum (as defined in the IEP or the Section 504 Education Plan) and the objectives measured by the test.

How may exempted students take a proficiency test?

The answer document or scannable test booklet for any test(s) taken in areas in which the student qualified for exemption should be marked according to directions contained in the administration manual and submitted for scoring. The student would be entered on EMIS as exempt and taking the test. The results of that part of the test taken would be entered, but not used to generate building or district aggregated passing rates. A student who is exempted cannot be prohibited from taking a test.

Are students on a Section 504 Plan affected?

Students on a Section 504 Plan may have modifications in administration procedures of the proficiency tests. The modification(s) in curriculum must be documented on the Section 504 Education Plan. They may not be exempted from participating in proficiency testing unless they are completing a curriculum that is significantly different from that completed by other students required to take the tests. Such exemptions would probably be rare.

If it is determined that a student is no longer disabled, is he/she required to take the proficiency tests?

Yes. Regardless of the student's previous history, when the student is no longer considered to be disabled, he/she cannot be exempted from taking the proficiency tests.

Must a student on home instruction be provided the opportunity to take the proficiency tests?

Yes. Any student with disabilities is eligible to take the tests regardless of the type of educational environment.

Are there provisions for exempting adults with disabilities?

Rule 3301-13-09 of the Administrative Code lists the provisions for exemption from the ninth-grade proficiency tests of an adult with disabilities.

ESTABLISHING PROVISIONS FOR WAIVERS

How is a waiver different from an exemption?

Section 3317.03 of the Revised Code provides that a school district may not include in its average daily membership (ADM) any student who did not take the proficiency tests as required during the previous school year, unless that student was granted an exemption by the school district because of disabilities or was granted a waiver by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. **There are two major differences between a waiver and an exemption:** how they are granted and their impact for students. An exemption is granted by the district in accordance with district policy. A waiver is granted by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education.

In the case of the fourth, sixth, and twelfth grade proficiency tests, the waiver provides the necessary accounting for the enrolled student who was not tested. In the case of the ninth-grade proficiency tests, the waiver is requested for the student who has missed taking the proficiency tests in both the October and March admin-

istrations. The waiver, however, does not absolve the student from the test-passing requirement in order to be eligible for a diploma. For example, a student with a temporary health condition who is on home instruction (e.g., prolonged illness) may be granted a waiver from an individual administration of the test, but such student still is required to pass the ninth-grade proficiency tests prior to receiving a diploma. If the district has the ability to have a tutor administer the tests at the student's home, these arrangements can be made locally, provided test security is maintained and the tutor is a certificated teacher.

In summary, an exemption is granted by the IEP team prior to the administration of the tests, and the decision to exempt is reviewed annually. A waiver is requested by the district superintendent after the tests are administered for any student who did not take all required proficiency tests that year. In this case, the district superintendent should request a waiver by letter to the state superintendent with specific details (name, grade, district and school IRNs, and reason for waiver) for each student involved. NOTE: A letter of request for a waiver on the ninth-grade tests is required only when a student has not taken the test for both administrations during the given school year.

TEST SECURITY PROVISIONS

What security provisions are associated with proficiency testing?

Except for practice test materials, all proficiency tests (including any and all material developed for use in any test form) are secure. It is unethical and illegal to reproduce any of this material or cause it to be reproduced in any format. It is unethical and illegal to use any such secure materials or facsimiles to prepare students for the tests or to assist students who failed the tests. It is unethical and illegal to alter a student's responses or to assist a student to cheat in any other way. No secure material from any test may be released to students, to the media, to parents or other community members, or to any other individual or group. Only authorized personnel should be in the room during testing; members of the media and other "interested" adults may not be present during the proficiency administration.

Who should see the proficiency tests?

Tests will be serially numbered and wrapped in sealed packages. Only those people identified by the district as authorized should ever see the tests. Those individuals might include coordinators, examiners, and proctors, as well as students taking the tests. Unauthorized persons may not see the tests, nor may they take the tests. Coordinators are required to account for and return all used and unused materials.

What are the elements of each district's written procedures regarding proficiency test security?

To protect the security of the tests, each district has established written procedures that address the following components specified by rules adopted by the State Board of Education: identification of personnel authorized to have access to the test; procedures for handling and tracking test materials before, during, and after testing; procedures for investigating any alleged violation of test security provisions; and procedures for communicating annually test security provisions to all district employees and students.

What are the consequences of test security violations?

Any alleged test security violation is investigated by the local district and reported to the Department of Education. If it is determined that a violation occurred, any of several consequences may follow: one or more students' answer documents may not be scored; the district board of education, after appropriate procedures are followed, may suspend or dismiss an employee found guilty of cheating or helping a student cheat; the State Board of Education, following appropriate procedures, may seek the suspension of a certificate; and a law enforcement agency, following an appropriate investigation, may prosecute under the state criminal code.

What are the standards regarding the ethical use of tests?

The State Board of Education has adopted rules of ethical practice

for the use of tests and other assessments. District personnel may reference Rule 3301-7-01 of the Administrative Code for standards concerning unethical or inappropriate practices that involve preparing students for tests, administering and scoring assessments, and interpreting and/or using results.

What activities are appropriate for helping students?

While it is not appropriate to teach students how to answer specific questions from any of the proficiency tests at any grade level, it is appropriate to be sure that students are prepared for the different types of content related to each learner outcome measured by the tests. Several tools are provided by the state, including the practice tests and the fact sheets/information guide, which provide more detailed information about each test and the learner outcomes.

It is appropriate to integrate instructional activities that address the learner outcomes at each grade level. It is also appropriate (and required for students below fourth-grade proficient levels) to establish intervention programs to assist students. The Ohio Department of Education, Division of Professional Development can provide additional assistance to districts desiring to create and implement intervention strategies.

Although test items used to measure the outcomes vary from form to form of the tests, all are related to the adopted learner outcomes and to the specifications described in the fact sheets/information guide for each grade level tested (i.e., 4, 6, 9, and 12). Since proficiency test learning outcomes are taken from the State Board adopted model courses of study, at or below the specific grade level at which the test is administered, districts may want to focus preparation/intervention efforts on the implementation of those outcomes from the models.

REQUIRED POLICIES

What proficiency test policies and/or procedures must be adopted by each school district?

Each school district must adopt policies and procedures that deal with

- participation of students with disabilities,

- test security, and

- access to individual students' proficiency test results.

Each district board of education must have adopted a policy and established procedures regarding the participation of students with disabilities. The basis for compliance with this requirement is established in Paragraph (B) of Rule 3301-13-03 of the Administrative Code. Suggestions regarding this requirement are provided in the section of this brochure entitled **EXEMPTIONS.**

Each school district must have established written procedures to protect the security of the proficiency tests. The basis for compliance with this requirement is established in Rule 3301-13-05 of the Administrative Code. (See **TEST SECURITY PROVISIONS**).

Each district board of education must have adopted a policy and established procedures for releasing or permitting access to individual students' proficiency test results. These policies and procedures must be made in accordance with Section 3319.321 of the Revised Code, which is entitled "Limits on Public Access to Records Concerning Pupils."

Each school is responsible for sharing the record of a student's proficiency testing performance(s) with another school when that student enrolls in the new school.

Fourth-grade Proficiency Tests

What are the fourth-grade proficiency tests?

The fourth-grade proficiency tests are state-developed tests designed to measure learner outcomes for writing, reading, mathematics, citizenship, and (beginning in March 1996) science. These tests are mandated by Section 3301.0710 of the Revised Code as amended by Amended Substitute House Bill 55, enacted in the spring of 1992. The learner outcomes selected from the state model curriculum in each area, have been adopted by the State Board of Education.

Who constructs and/or reviews the tests?

The initial banks of items were constructed by Riverside Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois, a national test development firm. Items were written according to specifications provided by Ohio educators and field tested in Ohio schools. Only reviewed, field tested, and approved items are used on the proficiency tests.

When are the fourth-grade tests administered?

The law requires that these tests be administered annually to all eligible fourth-grade students beginning in the 1994-95 school year. The tests will be administered each year beginning on the first Monday after the fifteenth of March. All make-up testing will be completed within fifteen calendar days of the last regularly-scheduled test administration date. The regular testing period will be four days in March 1995 (and five days beginning in March 1996 with the addition of science) to enable districts to schedule only one test per day if they choose to do so.

What test areas are included in the fourth-grade tests?

In the first year of fourth-grade testing (i.e., 1994-95), tests will be administered in writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship. Beginning the following year (1995-96), and each year thereafter, science will be included as an area to be tested.

Are there any direct costs of proficiency testing?

These tests are provided by the state of Ohio at no cost to districts and participating chartered nonpublic schools. Scoring and reporting are provided at no charge to school districts.

What reports are sent to districts?

Reports to districts include, for each student tested, a score that indicates whether the student attained the level of literacy and basic competency established by the State Board of Education for each of

the tests (proficient level). Additional information about test performance including scaled scores for each test area and areas of strength and weaknesses will be provided for each student who takes the tests. Reports will be sent to district test coordinators within 60 days after the end of make-up testing.

What is fifth-grade intervention?

For any fifth-grade student who did not attain a fourth-grade proficient level in one or more test area(s) during the preceding school year, each school district must provide appropriate intervention services in that test area. The intervention, which need not be a pull-out program, will be local: locally designed, locally implemented, and locally evaluated. The fourth-grade proficiency tests can be used as an early identification of students who are at risk of not performing satisfactorily in school. Districts may want fifth-grade intervention services to be available to students whose scores, while proficient, were so minimally proficient as to still identify the students as at risk.

What is the sequence of fourth-grade proficiency administration?

The regular testing period for the first year (1994-95) is four days. Beginning with the 1995-96 school year, when science is added as an area to be tested, the regular testing period will be five days. This enables districts to schedule only one test per day if they choose to do so. Districts may choose to schedule more than one test per day if they wish, but the tests must be administered in prescribed order: writing first, then reading, mathematics, and finally citizenship. When science is added, it will be the last test administered. Districts must allow students up to 2 1/2 hours to complete each test area. Districts will have to balance the option of students taking more than one test per day with any student's need to use the maximum time allowed.

The same general rules will apply to the fourth-grade proficiency tests as apply to all other proficiency grade level tests regarding provisions for exemptions and waivers, test security issues, and required district board policies and procedures.

When do schools give the fourth-grade practice test and who will score it?

Districts may use the practice test whenever they feel it would be appropriate. There is no statewide scoring of the practice test. An answer key is included in the instruction manual so that district personnel may score it.

Is the practice test a secure instrument?

The practice test is NOT a secure test; it may be copied and distributed to parents. Each fall the state will supply freshly printed copies of the practice test so that each fourth-grade student has a copy.

Do students retake the fourth-grade tests after receiving intervention in grade 5?

No, they don't.

Can students be retained in Grade 4 based solely on fourth-grade proficiency test results?

No.

How long is each practice test?

Except in writing, each practice test is a half-length document. In addition to half the total number of items that will appear on the operational tests, the practice tests also reflect the same proportion of different item formats, (multiple choice, short answer, and extended response) as the operational test. The practice test in writing is a full-length example of both tasks that students will be asked to perform on the operational test beginning in March 1995. The science practice test that will appear in the 1995-96 fourth-grade practice test will be half-length.

Are samples of scored fourth-grade student responses to open-ended questions and the writing tasks available for all test areas?

Samples from writing and the open-ended items in reading, mathematics and citizenship will be available in summer 1995. Actual student writing from the writing tasks and open-ended items in the practice test will be selected from samples of student writing in all test areas. Teachers will see scored samples of writing tasks using a four-point rubric; short-answer responses using the two-point rubric in reading, mathematics, and citizenship; and extended-response samples using the four-point rubric in reading, mathematics, and citizenship.

Sixth-grade Proficiency Tests

What are the sixth-grade proficiency tests?

The sixth-grade proficiency tests will be state-developed tests designed to measure designated learner outcomes for writing, reading, mathematics, citizenship, and science. These tests were mandated by Section 3301.0710 of the Revised Code as amended by Amended Substitute House Bill 55, enacted in the spring of 1992. Learner outcomes selected from the state model curricula have been adopted by the State Board of Education.

Who constructs and/or reviews the tests?

The initial banks of items are being constructed by Riverside Publishing Company, Chicago, Illinois, a national test development firm. Items are written according to specifications provided by Ohio educators and field tested in Ohio schools. Only reviewed, field tested, and approved items will be used on the proficiency tests.

When will the sixth-grade tests be administered?

These tests must be administered annually to all eligible sixth-grade students beginning on the first Monday after the fifteenth of March in the 1995-96 school year. All make-up testing must be completed within fifteen calendar days of the last regularly

scheduled test administration date. The regular testing period will be five days to enable districts to schedule only one test per day if they choose to do so.

What is the sequence of sixth-grade proficiency administration?

Districts may choose to schedule more than one test per day if they wish, but the tests must be administered in prescribed order: writing first, then reading, mathematics, citizenship, and finally science. While students may take more than one sixth-grade test area per day, districts must balance this option with any student's need to use the maximum time allowed (up to 2 1/2 hours per test area).

Are there any direct costs to sixth-grade proficiency testing?

These tests will be provided to school districts. Scoring and reporting will be provided at no direct charge to school districts.

What reports are sent to districts?

Reports to districts will include, for each student tested, a score that indicates whether the student attained the proficient level established by the State Board of Education for each of the tests. Additional information about test performance including scaled scores for each test area and areas which need improvement will be provided for each student tested.

The same general rules will apply to the sixth-grade proficiency tests as apply to all other proficiency grade level tests regarding provisions for exemptions and waivers, test security issues and required district board policies and procedures.

Additional information about these sixth-grade tests and designated outcomes was disseminated to districts after outcomes were adopted by the State Board of Education in November 1994.

Ninth-grade Proficiency Tests

What are the ninth-grade proficiency tests?

The ninth-grade proficiency tests are state-developed measures of student literacy and basic competency in writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship, and (beginning in the 1995-96 school year) science. These tests have the "highest-stakes" of all the proficiency tests. Each non-exempted student in Ohio must pass all of the ninth-grade proficiency tests and meet state and local curricular requirements before receiving a diploma.

Who constructs and/or reviews the tests?

The initial banks of items were constructed by IOX Assessment Associates, Inc., of Los Angeles, California, a national test development firm. Another national test development firm, American College Testing of Iowa City, Iowa, has prepared and field tested additional items and new items for science according to specifications provided by Ohio educators. Only reviewed, field tested, and approved items are used on the proficiency tests.

The questions on four of these tests are based on learner outcomes which were adopted by the State Board of Education in 1988. The science learning outcomes and the model science course of study were adopted in July 1994. Although students will begin taking the science tests in the ninth grade in March 1996, students will not have to pass the science test as a requirement of graduation until September 15, 2000.

When are ninth-grade tests administered?

The ninth-grade tests are the only proficiency tests which students are provided multiple opportunities to pass. They are also the only ones which must be administered only one test per day throughout the testing week in the prescribed order: writing on the first day, reading on the second, mathematics on the third, citizenship on the fourth, and, beginning March 1996, science on the fifth day.

Test administrations are regularly scheduled twice per school year. The first administration begins on the fourth Monday in

October. Make-up testing is completed within fifteen calendar days after the regularly-scheduled test administration period ends. The second test administration begins on the first Monday in March. Make-up testing occurs during the fifteen calendar days following this period.

Are special administration sessions provided?

There is a special May 1-10 test administration for any senior still needing to pass one or more of the ninth-grade proficiency tests. Districts may schedule this special "seniors only" testing anytime within the May 1-10 window. Results of the May testing will be reported to districts by the end of May.

Any districts conducting special summer intervention programs may administer the ninth-grade tests to high-school students who participate in at least ten hours per test area of summer intervention. Each year the Department will announce the specific summer testing window when test administration will occur.

How may eighth graders take the ninth-grade tests?

Districts wishing to do so may administer the ninth-grade proficiency tests to eighth-grade students in March each year. Those districts administering the ninth-grade tests to eight graders have the option of waiting until March of ninth grade to retest students. Otherwise, districts are required to administer the tests to all ninth-grade students (other than those who passed the tests in eighth-grade) in October. Any student who does not pass one or more of the ninth-grade tests in October will retake the test(s) not yet passed during the spring (March) testing period. Any student who does not pass one or more of the required tests in March will continue to take those not passed every October and March throughout grades ten through twelve, if necessary, until passing them all.

How may students who did not graduate with their class retake the ninth-grade tests?

If a student has not passed all of the required ninth-grade proficiency tests by the time such student has completed all high

school curricular requirements, that student is not eligible to receive a diploma. Such non-graduating students are invited to return whenever and wherever the ninth-grade proficiency tests are given. Upon providing appropriate identification and evidence of completing the curricular requirements of a high school, these students may take the ninth-grade proficiency tests at no charge. Whenever the last test is passed, the student is eligible to receive a diploma from the school that administered the last required proficiency test to the student.

May adult students who have not completed the curriculum and who are enrolled in Adult High School classes take the proficiency tests with the adult students who did not graduate with their class?

Adult High School students could take tests with these adult students if the school and student prefer.

Is there an alternative administration of the ninth-grade tests?

There is no alternative administration in the area of writing. According to Rule 3301-13-08 of the Administrative Code, a student may qualify for an alternative (oral) administration of the ninth-grade reading, mathematics, or citizenship tests if a student's school sends the Department of Education a written appeal documenting that the student has

- completed all curricular requirements for graduation except for courses in which he or she is enrolled during the last semester of high school.
- taken but not yet passed one or more parts of the tests.
- been identified as limited English proficient (LEP) or maintained at least a 2.5 grade-point average on a 4-point scale (or the equivalent) in all high school courses corresponding to the test area not yet passed. (See Appendix.)

LEP students may also qualify for a state-provided interpreter in the test areas of mathematics and citizenship. As in any proficiency test administration, students whose native language is not English

may use a translation dictionary and have extended testing time beyond the 2 1/2 hours per test area. All modifications described in this section are provided ONLY by State examiners after a district has initiated an appeal for the individual student. Any student who qualifies for the alternative administration and fails to meet test standards is eligible for one additional appeal per year.

Are nonpublic school students required to take these tests?

This ninth-grade testing requirement pertains to all students attending Ohio public schools. Chartered nonpublic high schools are required to begin participation in the program by testing all ninth-graders in the 1995-96 school year starting in October 1995, and every year thereafter. Adult high school programs that are not GED coursework are also required to abide by these testing rules.

What must foreign exchange students do in order to receive a diploma?

Foreign exchange students who are not U.S. citizens, not U.S. residents, and who will be returning to their home country after graduation must pass all of the ninth-grade proficiency tests except citizenship and meet curricular requirements before being granted a diploma.

How were the passing standards set?

The passing standard for each of the tests was established by the State Board of Education based on the recommendation of ninth-grade classroom teachers and the reports of three oversight committees (Bias Review Panel, Testing Steering Committee, and Technical Advisory Panel) that reviewed procedures and recommendations of the standard setting committees before the recommendations went to the State Board.

Twelfth-grade Proficiency Tests

What are the twelfth-grade proficiency tests?

The twelfth-grade proficiency tests are tests designed to measure twelfth-grade levels of literacy and basic competency in the same

content areas as all of the other grade-level proficiency tests: writing, reading, mathematics, and citizenship, with science to be added in February 1996. The items used on four of these tests are based upon the learner outcomes adopted by the State Board of Education in 1988. Objectives for the science test were adopted in July 1994.

Who is required to take the twelfth-grade proficiency tests?

All twelfth-grade students and adult high school students who are not exempted due to disabilities and who by January 1 of their senior year in high school have passed all of the ninth-grade proficiency tests are required to take the twelfth-grade proficiency tests.

Who constructs and/or reviews the tests?

The initial banks of items and the science test were constructed by American College Testing, of Iowa City, Iowa, a national test development firm. Items were written according to specifications provided by Ohio educators and field tested in Ohio schools. Only reviewed, field tested, and approved items are used on the proficiency tests.

When are the twelfth-grade tests administered?

These tests are administered once each year, beginning on the first Monday in February. The tests are administered in the same order as all proficiency tests: first writing, then reading, mathematics and citizenship. Science will be the last test administered when it is added in February 1996. While the regular testing period encompasses four days to accommodate schools wishing to administer only one test per day, districts may schedule more than one test per day if they deem such scheduling prudent, provided they allow students up to two and one-half hours to complete each test if the students need that much time.

What is the purpose of the twelfth-grade tests?

The primary purposes of the twelfth-grade proficiency tests are to evaluate high school curriculum in writing, reading, mathematics, citizenship, and science relative to the learning outcomes adopted and to provide an indication to students tested whether or not they have attained the knowledge and skills expected of the "typical" high school graduate. The outcomes measured reflect the high school curriculum through first semester of the senior year. Performance on the twelfth-grade tests at the honors level in all test areas may be used to meet one criterion for earning a Diploma with Honors. The primary purpose of the twelfth-grade tests is to measure student proficiency with respect to what is taught in high school.

Why are there two standards for each twelfth-grade test area?

Two standards have been established by the State Board of Education for each twelfth-grade proficiency test: proficient level and honors level. While the proficient level describes performance of the "typical" high school graduate, the honors level describes a higher performance typical of students who might want to receive a Diploma with Honors.

What are the criteria for a Diploma with Honors?

On January 11, 1993, the State Board of Education approved criteria for earning a Diploma with Honors.

Each school district shall award the Diploma with Honors to any student graduating after September 15, 1993 who:

- successfully completes the high school curriculum or individualized education program developed for the student by the high school,
- demonstrates at least a ninth-grade level of literacy and basic competency on all ninth-grade proficiency tests, and
- meets the criteria for honors provided below.

The student who completes the **college preparatory curriculum** in

high school shall meet at **least seven of the following eight criteria:**

- earn four units of English
- earn three units of mathematics including at least the competencies obtained in Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry
- earn three units of science including at least one unit in a foundational science with an emphasis in chemistry and at least one unit in an applied science with an emphasis in biology
- earn three units of social studies
- earn either three units of one foreign language or two units each of two foreign languages*
- earn one unit of fine arts
- maintain an overall high school grade point of at least 3.5 on a four-point scale up to the last grading period of the senior year
- obtain the score(s) on the twelfth-grade proficiency tests designated by the State Board of Education or obtain a composite score of 27 on the ACT or an equivalent composite score on the SAT (1130 on SAT or 1210 on SAT I).

The student who completes at least two years of an **intensive vocational or technical education curriculum** in the high school shall meet **at least seven of the following eight criteria:**

- earn four units of English which may include one unit of applied communication
- earn two units of mathematics which will include algebra, geometry, or the equivalent in applied mathematics
- earn two units of science, at least one of which will be an applied science with an emphasis in biology
- earn three units of social studies
- earn either two units of a foreign language or two units of computer science
- maintain an overall high-school grade point average of at least 3.5 on a four-point scale up to the last grading period of the senior year

- complete a career passport, including the demonstration of proficiency in 95% of the occupational core competencies as judged by at least two content experts
- obtain the score(s) on the twelfth-grade proficiency tests designated by the State Board of Education or obtain a composite score of 27 on the ACT or an equivalent composite score on the SAT (1130 on SAT or 1210 on SAT I).

*** Until September 15, 1995, anyone graduating from a school that offers neither three units of one nor two units of two foreign languages will meet this particular criterion by earning either three units of foreign language or two units of foreign language and one unit of computer science.**

Can a student with disabilities receive a Diploma with Honors if exempted from part(s) of the ninth-grade proficiency tests?

Yes. A student with an exemption for an area (or multiple areas) of the ninth-grade proficiency tests could be eligible for the Diploma with Honors if the student meets the criteria established to earn such a diploma.

When will science begin to be required as a Diploma with Honors criteria?

Science will not be one of the test areas required to satisfy the honors diploma criteria until September 15, 2000.

If you have questions not addressed in this brochure, or if you would like additional information about Ohio's proficiency testing program, contact the Assessment Center at (614)466-0223.

APPENDIX

Appeals for an Oral Administration of the Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests

Please provide COMPLETE and ACCURATE information. Any form not containing complete documentation will be returned to the district. NOTE: Releasing this information to the State REQUIRES the signature of the parent or guardian (or the student, if the student is age 18 or older).

Name of Student (Print or Type)

_____

Student's Home Address (Print or Type)

_____

City _____ Zip Code _____

School District _____ County _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Current Grade Level: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Number of Credits Earned Through Last Semester: _____

Number of Credits Enrolled This Semester: _____

Number of Credits Required by District for Graduation: _____

Test Area(s) Appealed (Check All That Apply):

____ Reading ____ Mathematics ____ Citizenship

Student's Native Language: _____

Translator is requested for ____ Mathematics ____ Citizenship

List below by test area the name of each high school course for which credits have been earned by this student in each test area being appealed, and attach a copy of the student's transcript as documentation of credits earned and grades received.

Reading Related Courses	Math Courses	Social Studies Courses
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

NOTE: ALL SIGNATURES ARE REQUIRED.

Name of District Superintendent (Print/Type) _____

Superintendent's Signature

_____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian/Student Over 18 (Signature)

_____ Date _____

NOTE: By signing, the Parent/Guardian/Student agrees to release to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction the information accompanying this appeal and any other related documentation required to verify the student's eligibility for an oral administration of the ninth-grade proficiency tests in accordance with Rule 3301-13-08 of the Administrative Code.

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